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Senate

The Senate met at 2:30 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, by whose providence our forebears brought forth this Nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to equal justice for all, fill our lawmakers with a similar passion for life and liberty. May their smaller successes prompt larger undertakings for human betterment. Lord, guide them with Your higher wisdom so that Your will may be accomplished on Earth, even as it is in Heaven. Give our Senators the moral and spiritual stamina to walk with integrity that they may fulfill their high calling in service to this land we love. Use them also to advance Your Kingdom on Earth.

We pray in Your powerful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HOEVEN). The majority leader is recognized.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 1698

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk that is due for a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1698) to exclude payments from State eugenics compensation programs from consideration in determining eligibility for, or the amount of, Federal public benefits.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceedings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

LEGISLATIVE PROCESS IN THE SENATE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I wish to share a few lines from an opinion piece Speaker BOEHNER wrote last week. It began:

In November, the American people decided to entrust Republicans with control of the U.S. Senate, where common-sense jobs bills too often went to die in recent years. Now, since the start of this year, the Republican majority of the U.S. House finally has a willing partner in our work on behalf of the American people. It is an opportunity we haven't let go to waste.

The Speaker is hardly the only one who feels good about a new Senate that is back to work for the American people. The State work period was a good reminder of just that. Over the past week, Kentuckians repeated similar sentiments at events I attended across the Commonwealth.

It is no surprise our constituents feel this way because the American people see more signs of more open debate in the new Senate. They see more opportunities for Senators in both parties to take a stake in the legislative process. They see us passing bills. They see committees working again. Quite a bit of bipartisan reform legislation has emerged from committees already, often with strong support from both parties.

EVERY CHILD ACHIEVES ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, this week we will begin floor debate on yet another such bipartisan measure, the Every Child Achieves Act.

Many Washington pundits assumed that Congress could never agree on a workable solution to replace a broken No Child Left Behind law, and they certainly didn't believe one would receive unanimous committee support from both Republicans and Democrats. But many of those folks didn't think Washington could reform the Medicare payment system or pass trade legislation either. So it is a good thing Chairman ALEXANDER and Ranking Member MURRAY didn't listen to them. The new Congress has proved the pundits wrong already. If the senior Senator from Tennessee and his Democratic counterpart from Washington State have their way, the new Congress will prove them wrong yet again.

The Every Child Achieves Act aims to assure we are helping students to succeed instead of helping Washington to grow, and it recognizes an obvious truth; that the needs of a student in Eastern Kentucky aren't likely to be the same as those of students in South Florida or downtown Manhattan. The bill would give States the flexibility to develop systems that work for the needs of their students rather than the one-size-fits-all mandate of Washington, taking decisions out of the hands of Federal bureaucrats and putting them into the hands of real experts: parents, teachers, and State and local leaders.

I will be talking more about the bipartisan Every Child Achieves Act later this week. But the fact that we are even on the floor today discussing yet another important reform solution to yet another seemingly intractable problem is one more reminder that this is a new Congress that is focused on solutions for the American people.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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